

INSTALLATION
OF
REV. JOSEPH MAY
AS
PASTOR
OF THE
First Unitarian Congregational Society
OF
PHILADELPHIA,
JANUARY 12, 1876.
WITH A SKETCH
OF THE
ORIGIN OF THE CHURCH.

PHILADELPHIA :

M DCCC LXXVI.

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THE INSTALLATION.



THE INSTALLATION.

At a meeting of the members of the First Unitarian Congregational Society of Philadelphia, held on Wednesday evening, Dec. 8th, 1875, for the purpose of considering the subject of choosing a pastor, it was decided to invite the Rev. Joseph May, of Newburyport, Mass. The Chairman of the Trustees was instructed to notify him of his election, and to ask his acceptance of the position.

The invitation and acceptance were communicated in the following correspondence :

Phila., Dec. 9th, 1875.

MY DEAR SIR :

At a meeting of our Unitarian Society on Wednesday (yesterday) evening for the purpose of deciding whom we would invite to become the settled pastor of the Society, the choice, after an informal ballot, fell, on a regular vote, by a large majority, on you.

The Chairman of the Trustees was thereupon instructed by vote to inform you of the action of the Society, and to invite you to become its settled pastor, at an annual salary of four thousand dollars. On behalf of the Society, I therefore give you this "call," and I will only add, that in doing so, I have personally great satisfaction.

Very respectfully yours,

HENRY WINSOR,

Chairman of Trustees.

REV. JOSEPH MAY,

Newburyport.

Newburyport, Dec. 16th, 1875.

HENRY WINSOR, ESQ.,

Chairman of Trustees, Unitarian Church, Philadelphia.

DEAR SIR :

I now respectfully inform you that I accept, with high appreciation of the honor done me by their choice, the invitation of your Society to become their minister.

I do so with unfeigned diffidence also, and under a sense, almost oppressive, of the responsibilities I incur. I am, indeed, upborne by the cordiality with which I am invited to the service, and by my assurance of the many encouragements which will certainly attend my efforts. But I feel deeply that I need abundantly the blessing of God upon me in accepting such a trust, and that only by His help, for which I pray, can I hope to be equal to my task.

May I, as I proceed, inherit some portion of the spirit of your late pastor—honored and beloved by me, as by yourselves—whose relation to you can only in form be severed, and whose affectionate welcome of me as his successor renders the prospect of taking up the responsibility he has well earned the right to lay down, so peculiarly inviting.

With earnest prayers that I may be enabled to attain to even a degree of that which your people doubtless hope for in me, and that the best interests of the Church may be prospered in our united hands, I remain, with most agreeable personal anticipations,

Faithfully yours,

JOSEPH MAY.

The 12th day of January, 1876, being the fifty-first anniversary of the ordination of William H. Furness, D. D., as pastor of this Society, was considered to be an especially appropriate day for the Installation of his successor. It accordingly was selected, and arrangements were made by the Trustees for its fitting observance. As it seemed to be the desire of the Society and of its retiring pastor, to have the services as simple as possible, it was decided to dispense with the Church Council and the usual form of

Installation. Accordingly invitations were sent only to the two Societies over which our pastor-elect had previously been settled, viz., the Unitarian Society in Yonkers, N. Y., and the Society in Newburyport, Mass. ; also to the Unitarian Societies in Wilmington, Del., and in Baltimore, asking them to be represented by pastor and delegates, and to the pastor and members of the Society in Germantown, which we consider the child of our church.

At the hour appointed the church was filled with an eager and deeply interested audience. The edifice was beautifully decorated under the supervision of some of the ladies of the Society. Festoons of laurel, evergreen and smilax were hung from the ceiling along the front of the Pulpit. The pillars on either side were arrayed in ascending terraces with ferns and flowers, while in front, covering the communion table and all the approaches to it, were arranged growing tropical plants, amid a profusion of other natural flowers.

The music was excellent,—the organ under the charge of the organist, Mr. William H. Dutton, being accompanied by a piano, a violoncello, and the regular quartette choir of the church, increased for this occasion by an additional quartette from the Cathedral and other churches.

The services continued until ten o'clock, after which the guests of the Society, with the Trustees and their families, attended a reception given by Dr. and Mrs. Furness at their residence.

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THE RECEPTION ON THURSDAY EVENING.

On the following evening Mr. and Mrs. May received their friends at the house of Mr. James T. Furness, No. 1420 Pine Street—Mr. and Mrs. Furness having kindly placed their parlors at the disposal of the Trustees. Invitations were sent to all who are members, or who have been accustomed to worship with the Society—extending to them a cordial invitation to come.

This reception was largely attended—the house being filled from seven o'clock until late in the evening. Mr. and Mrs. May received their new parishioners and friends with cordial greetings, which were as cordially reciprocated. The occasion was in all respects a pleasant one, and it is hoped that all the new relations entered into by pastor and people under such happy auspices may be long continued.

ORDER OF SERVICES.



ORDER OF SERVICES.

I.

OPENING ANTHEM.

By Sir John Goss.

I will magnify Thee, O God, and I will praise Thy name. The Lord is righteous in all His ways, and holy in all His works. Every day will I give thanks unto Thee and praise Thy name forevermore.

II.

INVOCATION

AND

READING OF THE SCRIPTURES.

BY REV. THOMAS J. MUMFORD, *of Boston.*

III.

ANTHEM.

Arranged from Gounod.

IV.

PRAYER.

BY WILLIAM H. FURNESS, D. D.

V.

QUARTETTE.

Arranged from Spohr.

"Why is my heart so far from Thee,
My God, my chief delight."

VI.

ADDRESS.

BY WILLIAM H. FURNESS, D. D.

VII.

TWENTY-THIRD PSALM.

Quartette for Female Voices.

Schubert.

The Lord is my shepherd : therefore shall I lack nothing. He shall feed me in a green pasture, and lead me forth beside the waters of comfort. He shall convert my soul, and bring me forth in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil ; for Thou art with me ; Thy rod and Thy staff comfort me. Thou shalt prepare a table before me against them that trouble me ; Thou hast anointed my head with oil, and my cup shall be full. But Thy loving-kindness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life ; and I will dwell in the *house* of the Lord forever.

VIII.

RIGHT HAND OF FELLOWSHIP.

BY REV. CHARLES G. AMES, *of Germantown.*

IX.

QUARTETTE.

Golterman.

Eighty-second Psalm.

O bless the Lord, my soul,
His grace to thee proclaim,
And all that is within me join
To bless His holy name.

To bless the Lord, my soul,
His mercies bear in mind ;
Forget not all His benefits
Who is to thee so kind.

He pardons all thy sins,
Prolongs thy feeble breath ;
He healeth thine infirmities,
And ransoms thee from death.

He feeds thee with His love,
Upholds thee with His truth ;
And, like the eagles, He renews
The vigor of thy youth.

X.

SERMON.

BY REV. JOSEPH MAY.

XI.

HYMN.

Thou, only living, only true !
Far, far away, and still how near,
Strength of our strength to will and do !
We thirst to have Thy witness here.

Baptize our brother in Thy love ;
Unveil Thy heaven to his eye ;
Spread Thy wings o'er him, like the dove,
And his whole being sanctify.

Then in Thy glorious liberty,
A well-beloved son of Thine,
The tidings of Thy truth shall he
Declare with grace and power divine.

Trials, temptations he must meet,
The gloomy wilderness pass through,
Thine angels then uphold his feet,
And keep him strong, and free, and true.

W. H. Furness.

XII.

PRAYER.

BY REV. FIELDER ISRAEL, *of Wilmington.*

XIII.

INFLAMMATUS.

From Stabat Mater.

Rossini.

XIV.

BENEDICTION.

REV. JOSEPH MAY.

READING FROM THE SCRIPTURES

BY

REV. THOMAS J. MUMFORD.

READING FROM THE SCRIPTURES.

WHO shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation.

Unto Thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul. O my God, I trust in Thee. Shew me Thy ways, O Lord, teach me Thy paths. Lead me in Thy truth and teach me; for Thou art the God of my salvation; on Thee do I wait all the day.

They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.

I will both search my sheep and seek them out. As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered, so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. I will feed them in a good pasture, and upon the high mountain of Israel shall their fold be; they shall lie in a good fold, and in a fat pasture. I will seek that

which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick ; I will feed them with judgment.

The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places ; yea, I have a goodly heritage.

Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honor the face of the old man, and fear thy God.

When I bring the sword upon a land, if the people of the land take a man of their coasts and set him for their watchman ; if when he seeth the sword come upon the land, he blow the trumpet and warn the people ; then whosoever heareth the sound of the trumpet and taketh not warning, if the sword come and take him away, his blood shall be upon his own head. He heard the sound of the trumpet and took not warning ; his blood shall be on his head. But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned ; if the sword come and take any person from among them, * * his blood will I require at the watchman's hands.

And lo thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument ; for they hear thy words, but they do them not.

Speak, young man, if there be need of thee. Let thy speech be short, comprehending much in few words.

As for the truth, it endureth, and is always strong ; it liveth and conquereth forevermore. With her there is no accepting of persons or rewards ; but she doeth the things that are just, and refraineth from all unjust and wicked things ; and all men do well like of her works ; neither in her judgment is any unrighteousness ; and she is the strength, kingdom, power and majesty of all ages. Blessed be the God of truth.

Who went about doing good.

The common people heard him gladly.

Feed my lambs.

Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones ; for I say unto you that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor ; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything of ourselves : but our sufficiency is of God ; who also hath made us able ministers of the New Testament ; not of the letter, but of the spirit ; for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.

Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to Timothy, my dearly beloved son : I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day ; greatly desiring to see thee that I may be filled with joy ; when I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice ; and I am persuaded that in thee also. Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands. For God hath not given us the spirit of fear ; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. That good which was committed unto thee, keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us. Thou, therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Jesus Christ. Endure hardness as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. Preach the word ; be instant in season, out of season ; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine. Watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry. For I am ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight ; I have finished my course ; I have kept the faith : Henceforth

there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day : and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.



ADDRESS

BY

WILLIAM H. FURNESS, D.D.

ADDRESS.

THAT I should be invited, and should accept, the invitation to take part in this service, that I should have a peculiar interest in it, and should say a word here expressive of my interest in the succession of another to the office which I held here so long,—this is all a matter of course. How could it be otherwise? Your feelings, dear friends, and my own, demand my presence on this occasion, the anniversary, as it is, of my own introduction to this office fifty-one years ago. Of all who were present then I am, I believe, the only one present now.

And yet, now that I am here, what have I to say? I leap to meet this occasion. But, meeting it, I am all but dumb. What can I say that will amount to anything more than “Heaven bless you both, pastor and flock?”

It is not for me to offer your new pastor any counsel. He comes to us with ten years' experience in the discharge of the offices of this position. You have heard him preach; and how presuming it would be in

me to undertake to tell him how to preach, you all perceive. You have had proof that he knows. Shall I tell him how he is to adjust the claims of his study and this pulpit on the one hand, and the social demands that will be made upon him on the other? I wish I could, but I don't know myself. I have never been able to solve that problem. Shall I tell you in what estimation I hold him? Gladly would I do that if he could not overhear us, but I could not do it in his presence without offense. Shall I speak to him about you? The same sense of propriety forbids. What else remains for me but to offer you, both pastor and people, my hearty congratulations, which I do, with the earnest desire that Heaven may shower upon you its richest blessings, and "smooth success be strewed before your feet!" That he could not have found a better flock I know. I am equally confident that you would not have invited him, could you have found a better man.

I join with you, friends, in welcoming your new pastor for his own sake. But there is a special reason why I welcome him, that you will indulge me in the pleasure of mentioning.

Although I have dwelt among you now for half a century, and this place has become my home, and my native city is a city of strangers to me, yet the excessive pride in the place where they were born, so characteristic of all Boston-born people, has never entirely

died out of me. I still glory in all that is well done there as if I had had a share in the doing of it, and in every good thing that comes from that quarter. Accordingly it is a real happiness to me to receive as my successor a scion of a good Boston stock that I looked up to in my early boyhood, nearly seventy years ago. The grandfather, Col. May, of this young man, was one of that company whose venerable forms still dwell in my memory of that far-off time. Is the organ of veneration wanting in the young now-a-days? Or was it only the peculiar costume, now obsolete, which made old age venerable, kindling the imagination and commanding the reverence of us children? There is, it appears to me, a decay of respect for dignities both of age and office. I remember the time when greater personal deference was paid to the High Sheriff in my native town (it was only a town then) than is accorded now to the highest officer of the nation. But pardon me, friends, I wander. I only wish to say that right glad am I to welcome as my successor a Boston boy, the descendant of a venerable Christian man.

And most especially is he welcome to me as the son of one of the best men that I ever knew, a dear friend of mine, a very saint on earth was he, as he is now a saint in heaven. Samuel J. May was in the Senior class at Cambridge when I was a Freshman. How it is now I do not know, but in those days Sen-

iors were regarded by Freshmen as a superior race. Although I had known Samuel May before, one of the first things that I remember about him in college was his tender and faithful nursing of one of his classmates who was very ill. It was in character with his whole subsequent life. He was a very fountain of human sympathy,—a messenger of Divine love among men. To him, as to an angel of mercy full of the spirit of the glorious Lord Jesus, flocked all wronged and suffering people. He fell asleep nearly five years ago, at the age of seventy-four. Over his grave might be written with special truth,

“ Rest, Angel, rest ; await thy Maker’s will ;
Then rise, unchanged, and be an Angel still.”

I gladly welcome among us a living memorial of such a man, and of so venerated a friend, in his son. It is pleasant to think how happy my departed friend, had he lived till now, would have been in this occasion.

His son comes hither, as I have said, with full knowledge and experience of the duties of the position to which you have invited him, and he needs no counsel of mine.

Shall I then speak to you, dear friends, and exhort you to fulfill the duty, resulting from this connection, which you owe to him? But how can I do that? Fifty years’ experience leaves me no remembrance

but of your solid kindnesses to your pastor. From mere force of habit, you will take good care of his successor, I know. There is only one thing which I make bold to specify, one thing I pray you to give him; his usefulness, his very life depends upon it. With thankfulness to the Giver of all good, and with thanks to you, I acknowledge that you gave it to me generously, and it was my joy, my inspiration, my life. Continue the gift to him, give to my younger brother your constant, your habitual presence in this place. Let him have your support here, your attendance upon his ministrations, and it will animate him more than can be told. It will give him new power. It will keep him growing. When I first began to preach, before I thought of coming hither, Dr. Channing once remarked to me that it was a very difficult thing for a minister to talk to his people about coming to church (or to "Meeting" as the phrase was then). In my inexperience I could not then see where the difficulty was. I considered attendance at church a simple duty, and did not see how it could be hard to bid people to fulfill it. But I was young, and afraid to ask for an explanation at the time. The explanation soon came, however. It is obvious enough. The services of the church must be attractive, if people are to attend them. And when you, our hearers, do not come, the fault or the misfortune is ours, the preachers'. There is no virtue, no religion, in mere formal, unthinking

church-going, none at least in our estimation, whatever others may think of it. It is inclination, not a mere sense of duty, that brings you hither, I trust. You come because you are personally interested in coming. Let my brother feel that it is so, and you will help him as you can in no other way, to be more and more interested, and consequently more and more interesting. This service will have no appearance of an irksome routine, either in his eyes or in yours. But you will all come freshly every Sunday as to a glad and happy gathering. There is nothing, no gift that you can give, that will be so precious to him as this ; the steadily-growing trust that this house is becoming ever dearer and more pleasant to you, that you come hither with alacrity, and unwillingly and only for sufficient reasons ever stay away. Then, interested one and all in these ministrations, your hearts will be wide open to the inflowing of Divine love, to the grace of the Lord Jesus, and to the enlightening and all-purifying influence of the Infinite Spirit.

RIGHT HAND OF FELLOWSHIP

BY

REV. CHARLES G. AMES.

RIGHT HAND OF FELLOWSHIP.

Brother May :—We are all glad that the Coming Man has come ! We are all ready to say, “Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord !” For we receive you as a messenger of good tidings—a herald of the heavenly kingdom of truth and peace.

It is made my pleasant duty to tell you of the large, warm place prepared for you ; of the many mansions, in the hearts of this people and in the larger life of the community, some doors of which fly open at your approach, while others only wait the touch of the keys which are now placed in your own hands

At the threshold of this new life, and along with the cordial welcome you are receiving from this congregation and from its venerable patriarch—who does not so much retire as advance—I offer you the affectionate greeting of other churches, and other ministers, who have obtained like precious faith. We hail you as a comrade-in-arms—an under-captain in the King’s host—a true and trusty leader in that war where our only enemies are the evils which afflict

mankind, and our only weapons those of light and love.

I count this leadership all the more honorable, and certainly all the more real, because among us no man suffers himself to be called, or to call another, "Master." The modern minister outranks the ancient priest in this notable thing: that he is *not* set apart from his brethren so much as he is set *with* them,—greatest and most beloved when most truly a servant of all.

But, to a people who have already learned, you will have little occasion to teach the lesson that all the children of God are "kings and priests." Neither will you have need to conquer the freedom of a pulpit which was never enslaved; nor to create a free constituency in pews where no stereotyped interpretation has ever closed the ear against the voice of that living Spirit which continually makes all things new, and so keeps the thought and life of the church forever young, and fresh, and growing.

Of all who invite and welcome you here as their minister, you may safely take it for granted that not one man or woman wishes you to become a mere echo of what Jeremy Taylor calls "popular noises;" not one but fervently prays that you may be in no wise hindered from learning and declaring the whole counsel of God, for the guidance and salvation of mankind.

What cheer and strength you are to find in the support of so many loyal hearts! How many bright faces of men and women, now unfamiliar and strange, are to beam on you in happy friendship! In what a rich, warm soil are your own affections to strike quick root! In your case, shall come true again the saying which is written of the young prophet-king of Israel: "There went with him a band of men whose hearts God had touched."

But even the precious good-will of your associates, and the loving gratitude of those whose benefactor you are to become, must be to you, only as pleasant incidents by the way. A good story for us ministers is that told of Farragut, after the capture of Mobile. His private Secretary was reading to him a letter from the Navy Department, wherein he was warmly praised for the grand service he had done the country, and assured that his name would be written high on her roll of honor. "Go on! go on!" growled the old Commodore; "skip all that! Go on, and find out what they want us to do next!" Better for us than any caresses of society, or any praise for eloquence or scholarship, is it that every personal gain or service of humanity lead on to another. Better than that our names should "fill the trump of fame" is it that we sometimes hear a lowly, needy spirit say, "I was hungry, and you gave me meat."

Even in our relations to each other, we shall have

most joy when we are most in love with our proper work. Large and happy fellowships abide with those who are most heartily united in a common life and purpose. The true secret of mutual approach and essential agreement is, not in stepping out of the path and moving side-wise toward each other, but in every one's walking in the light which comes to his own eyes, and being true to his truth. Thus we shall move up the converging sun-rays towards our common Source and Centre. In all the history of religion, is anything finer than that line of Paul which lays open the secret of union among the early Christians? "They first gave their own selves to the Lord, and then to each other for His sake!"

This leads up to the fact that our mission, according to our measure, is identical with that of Jesus. We take up and carry forward the same work in the same line. We seek the same end—the completeness of human life, according to the will of the Father, as He has provided in the constitution of man and in the total conditions of the physical and moral world. We seek it in the same spirit—the spirit of unmixed goodwill and cheerful self-sacrifice. We seek it by the same means—speaking the truth in love. We succeed by the same mighty help—the in-dwelling, in-working, inspiring God.

So we share the anointing—the *Christ*-ening. We too must work the greater miracles of faith and love ;

we too must heal the sicknesses of sorrowing and sinning souls; must open the eyes of the blind; must safely touch and cleanse the filthy leprosies of the times; must cast out, with awful authority, the legion of evil spirits which infest and torment our poor humanity. We too are sent to preach glad tidings to the poor; to open dungeons and break off chains; to seek and save the lost; to bear witness to the truth; to destroy the works of the devil; to abolish death and bring immortality to light; to bear celestial gifts to men, and to be to them the way, the truth, and the life. Unless God has forsaken the church and forgotten the world, this is the Christ-work in our times, and the work of all Christians in all times, till old things are done away and all things are made new.

All this will belong to any man who can truly say, "I and my Father are one: the Father dwelleth in me, and He doeth the work." For whoever has received can give; whoever has light can shine; whoever has life can raise the dead. Ah! my brother, ours is a divine business! Little need we trouble if the work moves slowly: not the speed, but the direction of movement, is the main matter. The slowest being in the universe is the Greatest. We need to share His patience, as well as His power.

Ours, therefore, is the fellowship of a great faith, a great hope, and a great love. If we have no part in this inspiration, if we are not doing this work in the

power of this Spirit, our fellowship, our churches and ourselves may as well go to the rubbish-heap where so much else belongs.

Have we not also caught from experience some hint of a fellowship in suffering? We must share the sacred pain of that greater Teacher who was "made perfect through suffering," and who appeared, as every savior must, "to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." If not called to die, we are surely called to live for mankind, which may sometimes be the sorer crucifixion, as certainly in our times it is the more pressing need.

While I salute you as the minister of this society, let me also hint the dumb welcome of all these eight hundred thousand souls that throng the great city which is to be your home, and whose benefactor you are to be in ways they may never know. Your life is to be a contribution to the general welfare; you are to touch with subtle power all the vital interests of the community; and you are to be the chosen leader of a people who aspire to a part in every good word and work.

Little will it matter to you if there is indifference, misapprehension or hostility, among those who wish no one to cast out devils unless he keeps their company. The outcry of "infidel" will not scare you from fidelity; and yours will be the fine advantage of a position and a spirit which is generously inclusive and

catholic, even toward those who are ignorantly exclusive and constricted.

I am sure our candid Quaker neighbors are to have one more illustration of the ways in which every dollar raised by willing gift for the reasonable support of an earnest ministry may flow back in tenfold blessing on the people. Unfriendly critics will find their occupation gone when each minister is a devoted servant of the whole community and a missionary of practical righteousness; and when each society is a center from which the word of truth sounds out, and the light of wisdom streams forth, and the influence of good-will flows like a river of life.

Brother May, in the name of your new congregation, in the name of all the associated societies and ministers, in the name of that one true Catholic Church which includes all who seek to learn and do the Father's will, in the name of the great Son of God who has done so much to show us how we also may be sons of God, and in the most holy name of that eternal One whose name alone for us is above every other, I give you this Right Hand of Fellowship. Please accept it as a forerunner of many a hand-grasp which shall be not less cordial and sacred, and as a token of that growing recognition which is to wait on all your ministry,—a ministry which we all hope and pray may be long, and large, and deep, and high, and bright, and brave, and true, and rich, and fruitful and

happy. May you bear the rod of God in your hand, and may He cause the living waters to flow at your touch.

Welcome, blessed of the Lord! Welcome as one who already belongs, by the purity of his purpose, to the glorious company of the apostles, to the goodly fellowship of the prophets, and to the noble army of witnesses for the everlasting gospel. And in some future day, after ripeness of years and richness of service, may your memory also be consecrated as that of one who was in his time "the angel of the Church in Philadelphia."

SERMON

BY

REV. JOSEPH MAY.



SERMON.

"Other men labored and ye are entered into their labors."—JOHN iv. 38.

BEHOLD the universal law and condition of our lives! One goeth, another cometh. One lays his burden down, another takes it up to carry for his season. One sows, another reaps. Succession; progress; retirement! Labor; rest; reward! There is incompleteness at either end of every earthly service. We begin not at the beginning; we reach no finalities. We take up a task mid-way of its achievement. We bequeath our work, for us concluded, to be but the foundation of others' labors. So the round world rolls on!

Is this law sad? Is the condition grievous? There is, indeed, a pathos in all change; and mere cessation has ever in it somewhat appalling to our "active dust." But as all the permanent facts of life are only expressions of the essential truth of our nature, so in this we see the reflection of our immortal quality, and that grand endowment for progress which is peculiar to humanity. The realities are eternal. Our life-task is our contribution towards God's work of developing these, and making them effective in the world. It is a

part of that which is as unending as His being. We never complete,—but yield,—because we are workers in and with the Eternal.

Moreover, this law is a reflection of another great characteristic of our race,—its federality. No man liveth to himself. Our work weaves in at either end to the infinite web of Humanity's toil. We cannot begin, save by joining on to others' threads; we cannot finish, but only tie our own to the new strands of fresh workers. We live for each other; and consummate ourselves in each other. We live and we die for each other, whether we will or no. We speak sometimes of self-sacrifice. Let us rather say, there is no self-sacrifice—only mutual self-dedication. Herein consists the solidarity of our race. Without it, we were but units, fragments, unfruitful, purposeless, insignificant. With it, all is meaning, order, strength beauty.

There is an essential comfort, too, in this law of succession. All that we can lay down is only form, not substance; and the immortal mind is, by constitution, so impatient of everything not eternal, that it cries out at length for deliverance from each practical mode of duty. No outward service but must at last become intolerable. So beneficent Providence has everywhere broken up our service into epochs, of day alternating with night; season relieving season; youth, manhood, age; death crowning and translating life. Who will say this is not happy?

And still, this order does not inhibit the blessing and praise of fruition. Rather it provides for these. We share in an eternal work ; but our individual service, thus rounded into periods, continually affords us the opportunity of retrospection and the joy of harvest. One soweth, and another reapeth. Each of us rejoices in results to which all mankind have contributed, and which yet delight him with a sense that they are all his own. He has toiled his day ; the sheaves of evening are of his own gathering ; he lays them at the Master's feet in a content which is only the greater that he remembers the field was prepared, and the seed sown, by generations gone before.

And so, nothing on earth is so delightful to contemplate as the laborer who has done his tale, earned his reward, and may now wait peacefully his Master's call to new and higher forms of service. "Let not him who girdeth on his harness boast himself as he that putteth it off." Not the soldier entering the battle with trump and bravery is glorious and happy, but he that cometh out, dusty and fatigued, perhaps—but victor. And when one regards life, its day after day of temptation, trial, difficulty ; its exposure to defeat from a thousand causes ; its perplexities ; its demands for self-denial and heroism ; to have gotten through its active portion with the commendation of the good and with peace of mind, is the grandest triumph earth lets us look on.

Therefore, to-night, rejoice not with me, my friends, once more a beginner amidst the task and toil of life ; rejoice and felicitate him, your father in the Lord, who, long before I was born, had safely passed the critical time of youth, and begun here the life-work which half a century of noble service has entitled him to delegate to another. Rejoice, and bless him that he has had grace to be faithful ! Rejoice that God has girded him to uphold the banner of His truth, bravely, steadily, and successfully, for fifty years ! Rejoice, that in the times that tried men's souls, he flinched not from speaking the word of God, in season and out of season, for the poor, unfriended slave ; attuning his voice with that of yonder Bell, to proclaim liberty to all the inhabitants of our land. Rejoice with him, that God so enlightened him to penetrate the secrets of that holiest heart to whom the world turns hungering for light and truth, and to unlock its treasures for you and fellow-men ! Rejoice, that God's Spirit in his heart, while two generations have hastened by, has replenished him with charity, and led him in and out among you, a minister of grace and peace and truth to your souls, and an influence for righteousness all through a great city ! Ah ! my friend, my brother, my father ! rejoice for thyself, and give God the glory ! It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps. It was not thou, but God working in thee, that led thee to the desired haven of thy present repose and happy retro-

spect! Give again thy benediction, but envy not him who has all this duty still to essay! Supplicate again God's grace for thy successor, that giving him here the young man's blessing of opportunity, He gird him likewise, that, though for a brief day, only, of labor in thy harvest-field, he may be chastened, and protected, and inspired for a portion of thine own fidelity and usefulness!

One goeth, another cometh. Surely, you are feeling, my friends, for I am, what an epoch we are marking in the history of this church. You have been blessed with a privilege almost unparalleled, that few of you can even remember when this flock was folded by any other shepherd than he who now places his staff in my unsteady hands. The change will be harder for you than for those to whom modern restlessness has made change familiar. Perchance it will be harder for you than you are yet aware. We have before us the delicate task of mutual assimilation. Novelty will help you for awhile, but I know well that I need pray a congregation whose experience has been like yours, for a double measure of consideration. You are turning from an old man to a young one; from a friend to a stranger. My ways cannot be just as his ways, nor as your ways. My thought cannot be just as his thought, nor as your thought. My aims, at first, must needs be contrasted, here and there, both with his and with yours. My ideal of a church and

of my own office ; my estimate of your obligations and mine, must needs somewhere prove different from his and from yours. I am sure that he would not, and I believe that you would not, hope in me, or even desire, a mere fac-simile of the service and leadership you have enjoyed in him. Least of all would he, or, I trust, you, counsel me to attempt mere imitation of even those things you have loved and revered in him. By truth to myself only can I hope to gain, after a while, your respect and confidence. If there is aught of worthiness in me to assume this office, it is because I bring you something of my own, fit naturally and truthfully to express itself. I crave your patience till you begin to discover what of this sort there is. How little I bring to you, alas ! I feel too keenly. By what temerity I am even here, I scarcely know. But I have come to try ; and without reserve to offer you the few loaves and fishes of my store, which only God's grace can multiply to your fit nourishment.

And I, friends, need also time and care, as I study to understand the conditions of your church, and your own traits, that I may happily unite the threads of my labor with yours, and your predecessors ; henceforth the responsibility of this church rests upon you and me. Its life, its usefulness, its influence, depend upon you and me. You and I have together to consider what, in a day ever new, it ought to be and to do. It is, indeed, both the prompting of a generous respect

for the past, and a principle also of success, which we will keep in mind, that the efforts of each to-day should, as far as possible, grow naturally out of those of yesterday, and be organically united to them. The wealth of the world, moral as well as material, consists in its accumulations. The vitality and strength of an institution are to be sought in some characteristic principles of organization and operation, some divine ideas, which it has been working out, and which have made it what it is. Revolutions, therefore, radical changes, "new departures," are impoverishing even when necessary; and we can seldom afford to violently warp the line of development which an institution has been providentially pursuing. Of this church, we may well assume that through the four-score years of its existence, it has been sustained by some central truths, which have given it its individual character, and its force. It has been moulded by active influences, within and without, most of which must be useful, and some essential. These we must understand and utilize. They provide us our natural fulcrum. We take from them our natural bearings. On the basis of them its future must, as far as possible, rest. Out of them its coming form, its fresh activities, its new achievements, must be expected chiefly to grow.

But still, as its custodians, our gaze is not to be backward, but forward. We enter into the labors of our predecessors not to repeat the mere round of their

service, but rather to carry diligently forward what they have worthily begun. We are little without them : they are defeated if we are not faithful to ourselves ; yes, if we do not find, ever, something rich and strange in which to consummate their labors. We have not to do just the work which they had : the conditions of our labor are strongly contrasted to theirs. The thought of our day is not what it was fifty years ago ; the spirit of thought and of life, the mode of your own moral and spiritual life, are different. We have, in form, the same great system of theology about us against which our fathers protested—against which it will still be our duty, in many things, to protest. But its spirit is very different from what it was fifty years ago. It is maintained by its professors in far greater tolerance, with far greater reserve and respect for the rights of others' minds, than it was then. Meantime, we are confronted with systems of thinking which fifty years, if they have not originated, have vastly developed in organization and force, and which completely relay the foundations and revolutionize the method of all belief. Hardest of all to deal with, we have the frequent product of worldly prosperity and mental culture, in a wide-spread Sadduceeism in which all faith is dead, and hope, even, has decayed into indifference. For the world about us, also, is not the world of your fathers, when my beloved predecessor was young. Riches have vastly increased ; inter-communication is

extended, infinitely; society is more complex; more generally luxurious; men are better educated; more moral, I think; in everything, more individual. Politically, what a different state of things! We live in a different country, one might say. We are of a nation now, for the first time, united; and the centenary of its foundation is the epoch of its real cementing.

All these things, I say, constitute for us new conditions, and call us to new forms of duty, new discoveries, and probably to some new means and methods, as time goes on, if we would keep this church worthy of its own past, and make its influence what it ought to be.

It is in this spirit, my friends, that I come to enter into the labors of a predecessor whose shoe-latchet I am not worthy to unloose. Together, you and I must thus enter into the worthy work of him and the good men and women who in years past have with him labored in your church, and made it in this community, a beacon-light and a city of refuge. Plainly, it is not for me to offer any programme, or to forecast our future activities. I have a lesson still to learn, as I have said. Much of it I must learn from you,—*in* you, I may better say. Before I do anything else, therefore, I want to know you; you, who are to be the sheep of my pasture. I want to know you here, and in your homes,—and in my home. As I look into your faces, now so unfamiliar, I long, both for my instruction and

for my comfort, for a time when they shall kindle with the light of recognition, and when I may read in them, God willing, that legend of friendly sympathy, of established mutual trust and love, which, by His blessing, have greeted me, week by week, in the dear old church, already venerable when yours was founded, which has been for a while my fold and my home, and among whose faithful and generous people there is scarcely a countenance I cannot call that of a familiar friend. As I think of this, I feel that I must be lonesome among you for awhile. Hardly, perhaps, in a great city, and your larger congregation, can I hope for all that personal intimacy which gives its charm to the life of a country pastor. But give it to me as abundantly, and as speedily as you can. You are strangers to my eyes: but you are *my* people now: given over to me by my father's friend and mine,—not as widowing him, but as dowering me,—and I welcome you to my heart, wedded to me by the services of this night. I offer you a love already uprising in my bosom, and I beg you to take me so to yours, and give me your confidence and affection. Without these, I can do nothing and shall be nothing. With these, I can go forth strong and courageous in the great trust to which you have invited me. God knows with what diffidence I undertake it: how I would almost retreat from it now, if I took counsel of my fears. But with your sympathy and its inspirations, I shall be bold; for

they will "even" encourage me to hope that it is He, and not my wilfulness, which has led me hither at your call.

My friends, we have indeed a "goodly heritage." Do you prize it? And do you feel also what a great trust it is, and that it rests not only, nor chiefly, on me, but far more on you? Be reminded by these services, I pray you, of your own duty and responsibility. I alone could do little,—nothing worth the name. I can even add but little to what you can do. All I can effect is what I can spur you on to do, and do through you. The strength of a true church, its real life, its influence within and without are not in its pulpit and pastor, but in its people: and in them not merely as individuals, but as brethren cordially united in a common interest and duty. Of this the first condition is the same as that which must make your relation with me a true and fruitful one,—a genuine warmth of sympathy among yourselves as fellow-members of this church, fellow-worshippers of God, fellow-disciples and friends of Jesus.

With this as our foundation there is nothing we may not achieve. I say I will not seek to forecast the forms of activity to which we may be led, as times go on. I have nothing to say of this pulpit but that I believe it will be sincere and reverent, and I am sure it will be free: free for others, free for me. For it, I am alone responsible, and I should dishonor it, if I

kept it not so. One word only, more. In all that we propose or attempt together, let us keep our true end in view, and our ambitions pure. Let us not court popularity or numbers. Let us seek to spread our views; yet not for the sake of spreading them, but for truth's sake only, and for the comfort they may give to fellow-men. Let us be diligent: but let us not, Martha-like, mistake mere outward activity for true church-life. It is here, as the old saying was, "not many things, but much;"—nay, the *one* thing comprehends all. Our prime work is spiritual, and in ourselves. There must be a wide opportunity for service to others in this populous city, and we will not forget it. Let us open our doors wide, and whosoever will, let him come and drink freely at our fountain. Let us make our worship attractive and cheering to young and old, by every incident which God has fitted to touch and awaken the hearts of His children. Let us think faithfully, and may God inspire me to speak the word of truth to your minds. But still, in our own genuine religious life; in the purity of our own motives and desires; in our capacity for self-devotion; in the warmth of our piety and the abundance of our mutual charity, the real vitality and usefulness of our church must ever consist.

So, friends, let us join hands, and go forward! I thank you warmly for the cordiality with which you invite me here, gratefully evinced to me in the kind

expressions of your representatives. Heartfelt thanks to you, my father, my brother, for the wise and loving words you have spoken, both to me and to your people,—as they shall ever be, and you with them to be mine henceforth, God knows how long. Thanks to you, my brother and fellow-worker, for your kind and stirring welcome to a common vineyard. I would, indeed, that I dared hope to keep abreast with you! And still, by God's help, you and yours, and mine and I will do something, I humbly trust, not all unworthy of His benediction. And may God bless you, my people, in yourselves, and in your church, and even in me. Our field is broad, the harvest is white about us. Let us go forth, as God's husbandmen, to reap and to sow; yea, to reap where we sowed not, and to sow for others' harvests. God bless the memory of those faithful ones into whose labors we enter, and you have long since entered! May their spirits attend us, and their pure hopes and worthy efforts come in us to grand and sweet fruition! And may the comfort of the Holy Spirit, and the blessed influences of the example and thought of Jesus, be with us in all that we do and strive for, in all that we speak and think, in all that we enjoy and suffer, in life and in death, henceforth, forevermore! Amen.

ORIGIN

OF THE

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITARIAN CHURCH

IN

PHILADELPHIA.

ORIGIN OF THE CHURCH.

ON the 12th of June, 1796, fourteen persons, mostly Englishmen, at the suggestion of Dr. Priestley, who came to this country two years before, held a meeting for the purpose of special religious services in the faith of the strict personal unity of the Supreme Object of worship. The existence of this, "The First Congregational Unitarian Church," dates from that day.

The Association that was then formed made a formal public avowal of the Unitarian belief, the first, made it is understood, in this country. Although anti-Trinitarian views were beginning to prevail in Massachusetts at that period, yet no similar public profession of Unitarianism had been made even there.

By that little company of fourteen, it was agreed that meetings should be held every Sunday at the usual hours of religious service, the services to be conducted in turn by the members of the meeting, who were to read printed sermons and prayers.

It called for zeal and courage to maintain the posi-

tion thus taken. The religious prejudices of the community were aroused. Although the meetings were first held in rooms all but private, the little church was driven from place to place at the first. Denounced, it grew in numbers. Its enemies advertised its existence and awakened the curiosity and spirit of inquiry which drew others into the little fold. Our fathers were thus enabled to maintain their organization. Their meetings were occasionally cheered by the presence of Dr. Priestley, whose autograph enriches our Church Records. Although a member, he never conducted the services. His residence was at Northumberland, and it was only at intervals that he visited the city. The regularity of the meetings was interrupted by the yellow fever, which then annually desolated Philadelphia and scattered its citizens.

In 1813 an Act of Incorporation was obtained under the title of "The First Society of Unitarian Christians." Some of the then leading members were in correspondence with the friends of Liberal Christianity in Boston, among whom the most advanced, at that period, were Dr. Freeman, of the King's Chapel, and his colleague, Mr. Samuel Carey. Dr. Freeman stood in his day, to the liberal clergy of Boston, somewhat as Theodore Parker did in his time to his Unitarian brethren. Like Theodore Parker, Dr. Freeman was regarded as going 'too far.' And yet, when our fathers here decided to call themselves what they were, Unitarians,

Mr. Carey wrote and expostulated with them upon the adoption of that name, it was so obnoxious. The Philadelphia Unitarians, however, made up their minds to bear the odium.

The title under which the Church was incorporated was subsequently altered by the introduction of the term "Congregational" at the instance of the members of New England origin, who desired to bring the church more into fellowship with the liberal Congregational churches of that part of the country.

In 1813, a small brick church of an octagonal shape was erected on the corner of the lot occupied by the present edifice, at a cost of nearly \$30,000. Notwithstanding the ill-repute of their form of faith, our fathers received assistance in this undertaking, from contributions made by outside friends, whose respect and confidence they had inspired.

For a while the services were led by the members in turn. But for some time before the erection of a place of worship the office of reader had devolved upon three gentlemen: John Vaughan, Ralph Eddowes, and James Taylor. The two latter early began to write their sermons. Mr. Vaughan continued to read printed discourses for a while after the church was built. His resignation of the office was followed, after an interval, by Mr. Eddowes', and then for a few years, Mr. Taylor was the only minister. The office was discharged gratuitously. In 1824, it was resolved to

call a regular pastor. On the 12th of January, 1825, Dr. Furness was ordained.

In 1828 the first place of worship was taken down and the present church built. It was dedicated on the 5th of November of that year. For very many years the church has been encumbered by no debt, although upon the erection of the present building, there remained a debt of \$4,000 upon its predecessor.

W. H. F.

[*From the Christian Register, Jan. 22d.*]

PHILADELPHIA.—Rev. Joseph May was installed as pastor of the First Congregational Unitarian Society on the evening of Wednesday, the 12th inst. There was a large congregation, and the church was beautifully decorated. Rev. T. J. Mumford offered the invocation and read selections from the Bible. Rev. Dr. Furness prayed, and delivered an excellent address which is printed on our second page. Rev. C. G. Ames's welcome was cordial, fresh, pungent, crisp, and electric. Rev. Mr. May delivered an appropriate and admirable sermon, which was heard with great interest and satisfaction. His text was John 4: 38,—“Other men labored, and ye are entered into their labors.” The closing prayer was offered by Rev. Fielder Israel, of Wilmington, and Mr. May pronounced the benediction. The music was arranged with great care, and it received the warmest commendations of the press of the city. After the service, Rev. Dr. Furness gave a reception to the officiating clergymen, the delegates from other societies, and the officers of the church. The next evening Mr. and Mrs. May received the members of the congregation at the house of Mr. James T. Furness. In the course of the evening several hundred persons called, and the hours passed delightfully. As we saw the hearty greetings and listened to the animated conversation, we were impressed by the laudable sociability of the parish. The people seemed to know each other, and to take much pleasure in exchanging memories of the past and hopes for the future.

